

# January 21

Ecclesiasticus 42:17-21

**“Declare!”**



(1611 KJV) <sup>17</sup> The Lord hath ~~not~~ given power to the saints to declare all his marvelous works, which the Almighty Lord firmly settled, that whatsoever is, might be established for his glory. <sup>18</sup> He seeketh out the deep and the heart, and considereth their crafty devices: for the Lord knoweth all that may be known, and he beholdeth the signs of the world. <sup>19</sup> He declareth the things that are past, and for to come, and revealeth the steps of hidden things. <sup>20</sup> No thought escapeth him, neither any word is hidden from him. <sup>21</sup> He hath garnished the excellent works of his wisdom, and he is from everlasting to everlasting, unto him may nothing be added, neither can he be diminished, and he hath no need of any counselor.

**Question:** Why is there a strikethrough mark on the word “not”?

**Answer:** There is a significant discrepancy between the 1611 and earlier versions concerning this verse. The 1611 is in the negative (God **has NOT**...) whereas all earlier English versions are in the affirmative (God **has**...). See: Geneva, 1560; Great Bible, 1540; Coverdale, 1535.

Hath not the LORDE brought to passe, that his sayntes shulde tell out all his wonderous workes, which the allmightie LORDE hath stablished? All thinges endure in his glory. He setteth out the grounde of the depe and the hert, and he knoweth all their ymagination & wysdome. For þe LORDE knoweth all science, and he looketh in to þe token of the time. He declareth the thinges þe are past and for to come, & discloseth thinges that are secret. No thought maye escape him, nether maye any worde be hyd from him. He hath garnished the hye excellent workes of his wysdome, and he is fro everlastinge to everlastinge. Unto him maye nothinge be added nether can he be mynished, he hath no nede also of any counsell.

**Hath not the LORD brought to pass, that his saints should tell out all his wonderous works, which the almighty LORD hath stablished? All things endure in his glory. He setteth out the ground**

**of the deep and the heart, and he knoweth all their imagination and wisdom. For the LORD knoweth all science, and looketh into the token of the time. He declareth the things that are past and for to come, and discloseth things that are secret. No thought may escape him, neither may any word be hid from him. He hath garnished the high excellent works of his wisdom, and he is from everlasting to everlasting. Unto him may nothing be added**

neither can he be minished, he hath no need  
also of any council.

Great Bible, 1540 (verse 17)

Hath not the Lord brought to pass, and his saints  
should tell out all his wonderous works, which the  
Almighty Lord hath stablished? All things endure  
in his glory.

Geneva, 1560 (verse 17)

Hath not the Lord appointed that his Saints  
should declare all his wonderous works, which  
the almighty Lord hath stablished to confirm all  
things by in his majesty?

### **Clarification:**

From the 1611 KJV, I initially interpreted the passage to mean God has NOT given to the saints the ability to declare God's marvelous works. Upon initial study of this passage, I came to that conclusion because the 1611 states, "**The Lord hath not given power to the saints to declare all his marvelous works...**" I thought, "Maybe God wants to make known all of His amazing works Himself or maybe the Lord

prevents his saints from declaring his works, so that only He will receive glory.”

By the grace of God, however, I was led to a clearer, more contextual, and much more reasonable understanding. It's plain throughout Scripture, as well as in modern daily life, that God DOES allow the saints to declare his works. That's what we do... or should be doing. That's a part of spreading the gospel message—telling (and showing) how God sent His Son to save us all from inherited sin. That's a marvelous work! We certainly may declare it!

Nonetheless, the 1611 says the Lord has NOT given power to the saints to declare all his marvelous works. Does it mean the saints can only declare SOME, but not ALL? Does it mean the saints overstep God's authority when they declare God's glory? That would really be ridiculous. So we have to dig deeper.

As I sought the Lord for help in understanding this, I found myself looking

at even older versions. It was the Great Bible that spelled out things better when it showed that part of the verse was a question rather than a statement.

“Hath not the Lord...?,” (as a question) as opposed to, “The Lord hath not...” (as a statement) changes the meaning greatly. The older versions’ writing was a rhetorical question used as a matter of emphasis. It’s similar to saying, “Is grass not green? Is the sun not bright? Is water not wet?” Obviously you can’t logically turn those questions around and make them statements such as, “Grass is not green.” or “The sun is not bright...” But that’s what may have happened with at least one copy of the 1611 KJV. It appears that when the translators switched from question to statement, the “not” was mistakenly kept, thereby completely reversing the original meaning.

## Why So Much Attention to this Passage?

I wanted to understand this passage as I desire to understand all of what is considered Scripture. However, I later discovered something of even greater importance. More and more frequently, I am seeing the extreme value of having access to several biblical sources— and the older, the better. Particularly when it comes to apocryphal books, my understanding has been strengthened by utilizing older versions. I am also learning that it is intensely crucial to readily hear the Holy Spirit's guidance and to take heed HOW I hear (Luke 8:18).

Further, this is another very apparent example of how no single Bible version could possibly be “God’s Word” (as if *everything* written is directly from God). I’m definitely not saying much can’t be gained from reading and receiving Scripture. We must, however, stay mindful that Bible versions, even Textus Receptus translations, are *versions* of other writings and, as such, have the potential for various issues. We need to understand that all

Scripture must be “rightly divided” (2 Timothy 2:15).

Finally, I am reminded that when hearing what we believe to be Scripture, with or without the books of the Apocrypha, we must come in the correct spirit. We shouldn't come to God's messages for His people with a wrong approach such as brooding or worrying about other issues, disinterest, hypocrisy, or with egotism such as an, “I already know that” attitude. If we put up blocks, we'll be blocked. The seed will not fall on good ground and it will not grow. Therefore, we will not grow. We must come “as little children” and be willing to go in whatever direction the Holy Spirit takes us—even when that way is unconventional.

**So, Yes! Go Ahead.  
Tell it! Declare it!**

The Lord HAS, indeed, given power to the saints to declare all his marvelous works...!